

Outlaws hold off Panthers for first win

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The Enterprise Outlaws have already seen their fair share of close games this fall.

On Friday, Sept. 17, they finally gained the upper hand in one of those tight contests.

“This time we found a way to win,” head coach Rusty Eschler said. “I’m really happy for the kids, mainly for them ... to finally (have) everything come together and get a win.”

Jackson Decker’s one-yard touchdown with 2:03 to play proved to be the difference as the Outlaws held on for an 18-12 home win over Imbler for their first victory of the season.

The win was a needed one for the Outlaws after dropping two tight battles to start the season, including a 16-14 setback to Crane at home in their season opener, and a 36-32 loss at Pilot Rock a week later.

“It feels great,” Decker said. “Those first two games, we lost one by two, lost the other by four, and it really sucks when you are that close. We’ve been working all week at practice to just do it right, come in here and execute. It paid off.”

Decker’s score came after Enterprise held Imbler on downs inside its own 10-yard-line. Panther quarterback Carter Crook was tackled on fourth down to give the ball back to Enterprise with just 2:50 to play, and Decker’s keeper from a yard out on third down gave the Outlaws an 18-6 lead.

Imbler, which struggled against Enterprise’s defense most of the evening, quickly got downfield, needing just 45 seconds for Crook to connect with Tel McBride for a six-yard TD with 1:18 to play. Enterprise, though, recovered the ensuing kickoff and was able to kneel out the victory.



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise’s Trey Stewart looks for a hole during the Outlaws’ 18-12 win over Imbler on Friday, Sept. 17, 2021. Stewart scored a touchdown in the third quarter in the win.



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain

Caden Fent gets tackled by an Imbler player, but not before he snagged a first-quarter interception for Enterprise in the Outlaws’ 18-12 win over the Panthers.

10 plays — all runs — and 84 yards, with the Outlaws blending together the mixture of Gideon Gray, Stewart and Decker all the way downfield.

The big play was a 33-yard run by Gray that set up the Outlaws inside the 10, and Stewart scored a play later. Gray had 57 yards rushing on the drive.

“The whole thing was just take our time,” Eschler said. “We got into a rhythm there, and we were just burning clock and getting five yards at a time, six yards at a time, just moving the chains, moving the chains, and moving the ball down the field.”

Enterprise stopped Imbler on the next two possessions, and had a long clock-eating drive in between that, while it didn’t result in points, pinned Imbler deep. The four-and-out by Imbler on the next drive set up the game-sealing score.

“We fly around, we hit people, we play good defense,” Decker said. “I’d say the biggest thing is just saying up on each other.”

The Outlaws (1-2 overall, 1-2 Special District 2-West) are home again Friday when they host Dufur.

Also Joseph stays unbeaten

Joseph ran its record to 3-0 and picked up its first road win of the season, edging Dayville/Monument on the road Friday, Sept. 17, 20-6.

The Eagles continue their three-game road slate on Sept. 24 when they travel to face Prairie City/Burnt River.

Wallowa gets off to rough start

Wallowa’s delayed start to the season was a tough one, as 2019 state champion Adrian routed the Cougars in Wallowa Friday, Sept. 17, 58-0.

The Cougars are at home again Friday, Sept. 24, when they meet up with Union.



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Cooper Nave had a big week for the Joseph Eagles as they won six matches. The effort included an 18-kill, 13-dig performance in a win over St. Paul.

Eagles go 6-0 on the court

Chieftain staff

JOSEPH — Six matches, six wins.

That was the result of the last week for the Joseph volleyball team, as it swept Wallowa in an Old Oregon League contest on Tuesday, Sept. 14, then followed with five wins in five matches at the East/West Classic in North Powder on Friday, Sept. 17, and Saturday, Sept. 18.

Against the Cougars, Joseph won the road contest 25-13, 25-13, 25-12, and was led by seven aces and 11 digs from Aimee Meyers and 11 kills and 14 digs by Cooper Nave.

On Friday and Saturday, the Eagles topped St. Paul in three sets (23-25, 25-20, 15-13), then swept Damascus Christian (25-14, 25-20), Crane (25-22, 25-23), Grant Union (26-24, 25-23) and

Culver (25-8, 25-14).

The highlights were Nave’s 18 kills and 13 digs against St. Paul. Meyers had 12 digs in that match, and against Damascus Christian, Nave led again with five kills, Molly Curry and Meyers had four kills, and McKenzie Keffer had 11 digs.

Joseph (11-3 overall, 2-0 OOL) hosts Imbler Thursday, Sept. 23, in a matchup of the only two teams unbeaten in OOL action.

Wallowa, following the match against Joseph, struggled at the Classic in North Powder, falling to Damascus Christian (25-21, 25-14) and St. Paul (25-12, 25-6) Friday, and to Crane (25-18, 25-15) Culver (25-12, 25-23) and Grant Union (25-14, 25-17) Saturday.

The Cougars (2-8 overall, 1-2 OOL) travel to face Griswold and Nixyaawii Saturday, Sept. 25.

Knapp continues strong start as Outlaws win Wallowa County Invite

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — Zac Knapp has a second win in the young cross-country season.

The Wallowa Valley senior standout dominated the Wallowa County Invitational on Friday, Sept. 17 — the first cross-country race in Wallowa County in five years — with a time of 16:20.2, more than 1:20 ahead of the second-place time.

That second-place runner was teammate Bayden Menton, who organized the race as his senior project. Menton finished the course he designed with the aide of head coach Dan Moody in a time of 17:43.8.

The 1-2 finish helped Wallowa Valley win running away, as the Outlaws had four runners in the top 10 and six in the top 14 to finish with 27 points as a team, besting rival Union/Cove, which finished second with 39 points. The teams were well ahead of third-place Baker, which finished with 91 points.

Ian Goodrich placed third for Wallowa Valley, taking seventh overall with a time of 18:44.7. Chase Homan followed in 10th in 19:27.8, and newcomer Levi Ortswan edged Weston



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Zac Knapp, shown during the Catherine Creek Scamper, won the Wallowa County Invitational Friday, Sept. 17, 2021, in dominant fashion, besting the rest of the field by more than 80 seconds.

Wolfe for fifth on the team, finishing in 13th overall in a time of 19:34.7, with Wolfe in 14th in 19:36.1. Xander Perry rounded out the slate for Wallowa Valley in 26th in 20:53.0.

The rest of the team top-five was Pendleton (135) and La Grande (138).

On the girls side, the Outlaws placed fourth, scoring 70 points.

La Grande won on the girls side, taking the top two spots and scoring 41 points. In second was Union/Cove (52 points), followed by Baker (62), Wallowa Valley (70) and Pendleton (114).

Iona McDonald led the way for Wallowa Valley, taking 11th in a time of 24:04.3. Nevaeh James and Maddie Nordtvedt followed closely in 13th and 14th in times of 24:28.1 and 24:32.2, respectively. Lanie Stonebrink also cracked the top 20, finishing in 19th in 25:36.6, with teammate Michaila Caine in 21st in 25:41.6 to round out the top five for the Outlaws. The sixth runner for Wallowa Valley, Isabella Brann, was 32nd in 29:44.

The Outlaws return to the course Thursday, Sept. 23, when they run at Stanfield.



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